

Hib. 7. 691. 1

Dr. ROYSE'S
SERMON
Preached before the
KING
AT
BELFAST in IRELAND.

2 FEB 1912

KING

NEW YORK

A
SERMON
Preached before the
KING

AT
Belfast in Ireland,

ON
The 14th Day of *June*, 1690.

By *GEORGE ROYSE*, D. D.
Fellow of *Oriel* College in *Oxon* :
And Chaplain in Ordinary to Their Majesties.

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SERMON

KING

Delivered in Scotland.

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BY GEORGE ROBERTSON, D.D.

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,
AND OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

GLASGOW: JAMES MACDONALD, PRINTER,
1828.

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A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING.

HEB. XI. And the former part of the
33d Verse.

---*Who thro' Faith subdued Kingdoms.*

IN this Chapter you have the glorious
Atchievements and memorable Actions
of your Fore-fathers, the Patri-
archs and others set before your eyes:
And the main Engine by which they ac-
complish'd all their Victories was, as the
Author of this Epistle tells us, Their *Faith*.
By *Faith*, says he in the next Verse, *they*
escaped

escaped the edge of the sword, waxed valiant in fight, out of weakneß were made strong, turn'd to flight the armies of the aliens. And if we look back upon the Sacred History of former Ages, 'tis observable, that all the great Actions and Successes in the World were nothing else but the triumphs of a conquering and invincible Faith.

When Might and Power have been arm'd against it, when Wit and Malice have combined to crush it, when Tyrants and mighty Men rose up, and threatned nothing less than Ruin and Destruction to the weaker Forces, then did this *Shield of Faith* receive all their Batteries, maintain'd its Post against all its Enemies, threw down their Walls, razed their Strong-holds, and scatter'd those that delighted in Blood. Thus the Chariot and the Horse fell, and the Tyrant slept his last sleep, when the *Just Man* lived and triumphed by his Faith. *They are brought down and fallen, but we are risen and stand upright*, says the Prophet; that is, we who by a lively Faith reposed all our Trust and Confidence in the Name of the Lord.

And

And no wonder, that this Faith does subdue Kingdoms, since as St. *John* tells us, *1 John 5. 4. it overcomes the World.*

Who thro' Faith subdued Kingdoms. In which words we have a plain Matter of Fact related to us, *viz.* That the great Champions of the World did purchase all their Victories and Triumphs by their *Faith*. And here, not to run over the several Acceptations of the word, by the *Faith* of these heroical Spirits seems more particularly intended, that which Divines call, *fides Miraculorum*; that is, a belief (wrought in them by a Divine impulse) of God's miraculous Assistance against their Enemies, or a firm perswasion, that he would work such Miracles by their hands, and bring mighty Matters to pass, which in the nature of things seem'd nowise probable: And in this sense 'tis used by the Apostle in those words, *Tho' I have all Faith, so that I could remove* *1 Cor. 13. 2. Mountains, &c.*

But because we do't live in an Age of Miracles now, much less can we pretend to such extraordinary Impulses, or special Promises on which they built their Faith, I shall

shall therefore take the word in a larger sense, so as it may be applicable to us, namely, as it implies our belief of God's Promises in general made over to his Church, and our consequent Trust and Dependance on him for the fulfilling them : And in this sense too, I hope to make it appear, that through Faith still we may subdue Kingdoms.

In clearing of which, I shall observe this following Method :

First, I shall shew in general, That our Belief and Confidence in God, is the best Expedient in the World to secure the Success of our Arms, or to Subdue Kingdoms.

Secondly, I shall Enquire upon what Grounds and Motives we may expect the same Success as our Fore-fathers had.

Thirdly, and *Lastly*, What is required of us in order to this Success : *viz.* That we follow their Examples in building

building a lively Faith and Confidence upon God.

As to the former, That our Faith and Trust in him is an admirable Instrument for subduing Kingdoms will appear true beyond contradiction, whether we consider it in its own natural Tendency, as 'tis suited to such an end, or in reference to God's Providence, who does usually crown it with Victory and Triumph. First, if we look upon it barely in its own natural tendency, the belief and perswasion of an invincible Arm to assist us, seems admirably fitted for the advance of any undertaking whether of Peace or War. The very opinion of such Succours and Assistance as it gives a man a fair prospect of success, so it must be highly instrumental to it. For in the usual course of things Believe and Conquer do generally go together, and a firm perswasion that we shall succeed, is a considerable step to promote it. The true rational Ground of which is this, That every Man's Belief is the great Spring of all his Endeavours and Undertakings, and all the World do at ei-

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ther more faintly or vigorously according to the perswasion of their own strength, agreeably to the prospect they form of , and the event of things.

If a Soldier, through the apprehensions of the weakness of his Party, be distracted with Fears and Doubts about the Issue and Consequences of an Engagement, this as it must naturally sink his Spirits, so it will proportionably slacken his Endeavours too. But he that is buoy'd up by the thoughts of Omnipotence, as he must be flush'd with the sanguine hopes of a good Issue, so he will be warm and active in pursuing it. And therefore the Belief of a Divine irresistible Power, as it must carry a great stroak in the vigorous advance and application of the Means, so it must be allow'd to have a proportionable influence in determining the Issues of War.

And for this reason, should we suppose with the Atheist, that Providence did not interpose at all in our Battels and Engagements, yet the bare belief and confidence of it is of admirable use in advancing the Sword abroad, as well as preserving its Authority at home ; for be our perswasion either right
or

or wrong, yet since every man naturally does act agreeably to it, and since such a Belief does as naturally tend to the exciting of our Industry and whetting our Endeavours, consequently it must be of great use and advantage in the Day of Battel.

And therefore whether Religion be true or false, yet 'tis but common prudence in a General to preserve a due sense and esteem of it in his Soldiers, because this *Armor* of God has a peculiar force as well as the Sword and the Spear or any other Instrument of War.

But not to talk only in general, the Power and Influence of this will be sufficiently clear'd, if we shew in particular, that such a Belief of an Almighty Power is the only true Motive and Foundation of Mens Hope and Courage. For 'tis granted on all hands, that Hope and Courage as they are the great Vertues of a Camp, so in the natural course of things they bid fairest for Success, and therefore if this Religious Perswasion be the only Motive to excite these, the matter will be put beyond dispute, that our Faith may do great service in subduing Kingdoms.

As to the former, 'tis certain our hopes of Success are always built upon our belief of it. A man can't reasonably hope for what best pleases him, but what he first believes may probably happen, and according to the degrees of this, our hope grows more firm as well as more rational. A sanguine expectation of Success without any grounds or reason may be stiled a foolish Confidence, but does not deserve the name of Hope. And therefore then only do we hope like wise men, when we build it upon those Powers above that cannot fail us, when with the Prophet we make God alone *our Hope and our Confidence*, when we trust to the *strength of Israel*, and that *right hand which will have the pre-eminence*. This is like founding our House upon a Rock, where the Flouds and Storms shall not confound our Hopes, or ruin our Confidence. But to fix it upon any other Powers, whether our own Strength, or the Conduct of a General, is like Building upon the Sand, where the unsoundness of the Bottom does make the Pile as precarious, as the Foundation is treacherous and uncertain. He that conquer'd
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the Giant by Faith and a Pebble, has sufficiently caution'd us against such confidence as this. *Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.* Psal. 145. 3. 44. 6. And that we may not think this a Prophetical Strain only, or a touch of Pious Cant, our own reason does convince us, how unwarrantable that confidence is, that is founded barely upon human Succours: for be our circumstances at present as fair as you would have them, be your conduct or strength as great as you imagine, be it far superior to that of your Enemies, yet the chances of War are so various and uncertain, and the fate of it depends upon such multiplicity of accidents, that we can never have a true bottom and security for our Hopes, unless they are settled upon an invincible Power above.

But then should we suppose, that we are only equal to our Enemies, this as 'twill render the case in the nature of things more hazardous and doubtful, so it must lessen our hopes and confidence: for where two Enemies shall appear in the Field with equal Forces,

Forces, as they must engage upon the greatest uncertainties, so they can't have any sure grounds for their hopes, unless they were perswaded that there was a God to interpose, and to determine the ballance. But should we put the case, that we are inferior to them, then to be sure we can borrow no hopes from human Succours, because the natural course of things does determine the Victory in favour of their side. The consequence of which is, that in all the circumstances of War a man can never have a sure bottom for his confidence whilst he depends only upon the Powers below; and therefore the Belief of an Almighty Power is the only Foundation of a Rational Hope.

J And as all our Hopes of Success in War are derived from the Succours of Religion, so our Courage too does draw all its Life and Spirits from the same Principle: For mens Courage must necessarily rise and fall together with their Hopes; and men of Bravery and Valour, as the Philosopher observes, are always men of Hope. And therefore as our Belief of God's Providence over us is the great Spring and Vital Principle of the

the one, so likewise 'tis the main Instrument to excite the other.

To speak plainly, the business of War is such a hazardous Enterprize, and the prospect of Death so terrible, that a Soldier who has any apprehensions of it, can't well engage with a true heart and courage, unless he be perswaded, that there is God above, that will take care for him here, and reward him hereafter.

You know very well, that the main Office of Courage is to moderate our Fears and Apprehensions of Death. Now Death is an Evil too big for human nature, when we consider it in its self abstracted from our Faith, and as there is nothing in nature that can compensate for it, so nothing in meer nature seems equal to encounter it, for human nature as such must necessarily fear it, as it thinks on it; and therefore the Assurances of Religion as they are absolutely necessary to moderate these Fears, so likewise to maintain our Courage. 'Tis true indeed, a man may rush into the Battel without fear or wit, but this is not the Courage of a Man that considers, but of a Beast that
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has no understanding. True Courage is always joined with the consideration of those evils which it encounters, and as *Tully* describes it, 'tis *considerata periculorum susceptio*, a deliberate and thoughtful undertaking of any danger ; and therefore those that take the Sword without any thoughts and apprehensions of what they are about, dō make shew only of a Brutal Force, but can't be said to exercise a true Manly Valour : And 'tis much the same case with those who fight only out of a brutish rage and fury, for these discover only the violence of a Passion, not the greatness of Mind ; and this sort of Courage is usually found as false in the Tryal and Experiment, as it is in the Notion. For those who through a passionate heat and fury engage in Duels, are commonly the greatest Cowards in a Camp.

All which seems to establish the truth of our Assertion, That a Religious Belief is the Foundation of all True Bravery and Courage, and consequently the best Expedient to Subdue Kingdoms. And that we may not look upon this as a meer fanciful Notion, or the Idle Talk of Divines , I shall only
appeal

appeal to common experience and observation, *viz.* That those in all Ages who have been most Celebrated for their Faith, have been equally admired for their courage and bravery too, as particularly the Worthies of this Chapter, and the Primitive Christians. Whereas Prophane Wits and Atheists that have abandon'd the belief of a God, have been always lookt upon as the most timorous Creatures, and the greatest Cowards in the world. And if we examine the History of the Heathen States, 'tis observable, that the Success of their Arms was in great measure advanced by their belief and confidence in their Gods.

Hence in the *Roman* State we find, that in all their extremities and dangers from their Enemies, they took sanctuary at last in Religion, and when the Souldiers spirits were sinking, their Generals always took care to possess their Minds with this notion, that the Gods were on their side, and declared favourably for them. And this is the reason, why they so often produced Divine Prophecies and Oracles in favour of their undertakings, and always consulted their Priests about the
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will and pleasure of their Gods, that by these counterfeit intimations of the favour of their Gods, they might raise their spirits, and give them Courage in the day of Battle. And next under Divine Providence, we may ascribe the greatness of the *Roman* Empire to those encouragements which they fetch from Religion, and the belief of their Gods. Agreeably to which *Matchiavel* himself, though he was no great friend to Religion, yet in his Discourses upon this subject, he fairly owns, that the advance of their Arms, and enlargement of their State, was chiefly to be imputed to a sense of God and Religion established amongst them. Such a vast influence hath our Faith and Belief upon the Councils and endeavours of Mankind. And not to multiply testimonies, but to reduce all in short.

In the natural course of things 'tis plain, that a Man's Belief in all cases does carry a mighty stroke in advancing his undertakings, and particularly this persuasion of invincible succours and assistance from above, must necessarily inspire him with an answerable degree of Courage, it must raise his hopes,
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give life to his resolutions, animate his endeavours, and this will go a fair way to the taking of Cities, and subduing Kingdoms.

And as this Faith and belief of Gods Providence has a peculiar efficacy of it self to advance our Arms, so by the Providence of God it is usually attended with a suitable success.

That God Almighty does interpose in our Battles and Engagements, is as certain, as that he does exercise a Providence over Mankind: for the success of Arms and of National Engagements is such a considerable province, and so great a part of his government of the World, that we may as well question, whether he intermeddles at all in Humane Affairs, as whether he does interpose in this. Taking it for granted then, that Providence does equally preside over Camps as over Kingdoms, it is but reasonable to suppose, that he will bless those Arms with victory and success, that are advanced in his Name, with a due regard and application to him, and determine things in favour of that side, who build their Faith and reliance on him. For by believing and trusting in him, we really engage him as

a Party for us, and by being his dependants, we entitle our selves to his more special care and protection : Every one we know does think himself obliged to shew a peculiar concern for his own Favourites and dependents, and if the measures of humane kindness do extend so far, much more may we conclude it from the goodness of God, which is infinitely greater than that of his Creatures.

Agreeable to which we have his own assurance: *Who so putteth his trust in the Lord, shall be safe. And none of them that trust in him shall be desolate. The King trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the most high he shall not be moved.* Whereas on the other side, he that does not think his God worthy to be trusted, does fairly forfeit all title to his providence and protection ; for 'tis but just with God, that he should signalize himself in the defeat of those Arms, that are bruitishly advanced without any sense or dependance on him : And this was the usual methods of his dealing with the *Jews*, when they trusted in God and in the strength of *Israel* ; he went out with their Hosts, he fought their Battles, and subdued the Nations round

round about them ; but as soon as they fell back , and shook off their dependance on him, he gave them into captivity , and into the enemies hands. 'Tis true God does not exercise the same visible distinguishing Providence, in rewarding mens Faith with Temporal Blessings, as in the days of old, but yet as he is still Governour of the World, he seems engaged to crown the Faith and Piety of Nations with visible success, that by this means he may signalize his Providence to the World, and keep up a just sense and esteem for Religion, by giving such an open testimony and approbation to it. As for the vertues of private men indeed, they are not always blest here with good fortune and success; because in their single capacities , they shall be sufficiently rewarded in another world. But since publick Societies and Nations, as they are Politick collective bodies, have no other stage but this world, for the reward and punishment of their common vertues and vices, therefore Providence seems more highly concern'd to dispense and award them in this present life. And this has been the general observation of the Heathen States, that their
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Gods bestow'd Victory and Triumphs upon Kingdoms, according to Mens Piety and dependance on them. Hence *Tully* makes a fair acknowledgment, that the *Romans* did not owe their Conquests either to a prevailing strength, or to their own extraordinary Valour, Art, or Stratagem, but that they subdued the whole World by the irresistible power of Religion. And *Zosimus* ascribes the fall of that Empire to the contempt of their Gods, and a disregard to their Worship. And if these be the usual methods of Providence in rewarding the Faith and Piety of Nations, 'tis obvious to conclude, what a mighty influence our Religious belief may carry in subduing Kingdoms: and therefore if we would all joyntly agree in advancing our Faith and Religion together with our Arms, we should have but little reason to doubt of the happy issue and success of them.

And what grounds and encouragements we have to hope for this success, is the second general Head to be consider'd.

And here whether we regard either the promises of God to his Church, or the conduct and bravery of our General, whether
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we consider the Cause in which we embark, or the Enemies which we are about to encounter, they all speak out, *Be strong and of a good courage ye shall possess the land.* As to the former, what grounds we have to hope from Gods promises, it must be granted, that we have no particular promises made to us, that we shall subdue this or that Nation, as the Worthies of this Chapter had; but since it must be allowed, that God Almighty does exercise as great a care over the Christian as over the Jewish Church, we can't well suppose, that he has left it without the same hopes and encouragements: We all know that in these last days he gave up his own Son, that he might purchase to himself a Church at the expence of his own Blood; and as this is a higher demonstration of love, than ever was shewn to the world before, so it gives us most solid and rational grounds for our hopes and confidence. And as greater love than this could not be shewn, so neither any greater security, than those general promises, which he has made over to it, that *he will be with it unto the ends of the world,* and that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against*

Mat. 28. 20.
Mat. 16. 18.

gainst it. Which promises however they run only to the Church in general, yet they are no less sure and infallible than the most special promises whatever, and therefore they are an equal encouragement for our Faith and Hope. How much the general interest of the Reformed Church and Religion does depend upon the present Juncture and success of things, I need not tell you ; and since God has interposed his word for the Maintenance of his True Religion in the World, we may reasonably build our confidence on this, and face our Enemies with a true heart and courage. It was not long since that you stood by, and saw the salvation of your God, in the seasonable deliverance of this National Church, when a conjured race of profest Enemies at home were creeping into its Bowels, and a Conclave abroad was engaged to make trial, how far the gates of hell could prevail against it.

And since we have this fresh experiment of a kind Providence, in that he has delivered us, this may justly add strength to our Faith, that he will yet deliver us. The work is already begun, and if through want
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of Faith we don't *murmur and repine in our Tents*, in the power of the most High we shall not miscarry. And as we have good hopes of Success from the consideration of those promises, which God has made over to his Church, so if we look upon that great instrument next under him, whom he has employed to effect it, we may magnifie still the *Sword of the Lord and of Gideon*. A Prince, who as he was miraculously brought amongst us to begin our deliverance, so he seems to be acted now by a new Commission from Heaven to complete it. A Prince who has already conquer'd *by Faith*, without the force of Arms or an engagement with his Enemies. In short, a Prince in whose Conduct and Valour we might safely trust, if 'twas any wise allowable to *put our trust in Princes*: And as the presence of his Royal Person, so the Merits of the Cause too do joyn'tly conspire to give us new Courage and Resolution. For whatever Notions some Men have fram'd to themselves of the late Revolution in general, yet none of those pretended scruples can affect us at present, who are engaged now against a Forreign *French* Power, and

an open avowed Enemy to the Kingdom. I have no time to dwell on this, but if there be any Cause of War, that is just and honourable, you may plead it now : for this is no idle Contest betwixt Princes about mere punctilio's of Honour, no groundless quarrel to enlarge your Bounds, or to serve the Lust and Ambition of a General, but the glorious Defence of your Country, against the unjust Arms of a violent aggressor ; the Maintenance of your Liberties, Fortunes, Laws, Religion, and whatever else can be supposed dear unto you ; and if you don't think this a sufficient warrant for unsheathing your Swords, farewell first the English Spirit, and next the English Subject too, Farewel long-adored Liberty and Property, Farewel the Protestant Name and Interest throughout *Europe*, whose Fate must shortly be determin'd by the issue and success of your Arms. But besides the Merits of the Cause, there is one consideration more that bids fair for success, and that is the Enemies whom you are about to engage, the *Irish* and *French* Forces, the former a by-word and a proverb amongst Nations, both for
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their Courage as well as Understanding, and therefore they seem rather to challenge your Scorn and Contempt, than to exercise your Valour ; the latter an Enemy, that never made any generous Conquests by the power of his Arms , but by that of his Money, and ow's more to the perfidiousness and treachery of those he fought with, than to his own bravery. An Enemy whose Titles now adorn the English Crown, as the lasting memorials of your Fore-fathers Victories over him. In short , an Enemy whose greatness as it can be ascribed only to your Luxury and Ease, so it must as certainly be humbled by the recovery of your ancient Valour. Lay all these things together, and if they don't determine the Victory on your side, 'tis because you want that Faith , which will *subdue Kingdoms.*

Which brings me to the last thing to be consider'd , what is required of us in order to the Success of our Arms , namely that we exercise the same Faith as these Worthies did.

As our belief and trust in God is an eternal duty of Natural Religion , so it carries

an indispenfable obligation along with it in all circumftances and conditions whatever, but more particularly now the hazards and uncertainties of War do challenge the exercife of it in a more eminent manner. For the iffues and chances of War are all determined by a Superiour Hand, and 'tis God alone, that *giveth victory unto Kings*. The wife man has long fince told us, that *the race is not always to the fwift, nor the battle to the ftrong, but time and chance hapneth to all*. We may talk and project for Victory and Succels, we may joyn hand in hand, unite our Hearts and Councils, and form the Scheme and Contrivance well, but we are affured at laft, that the *Counfel of the Lord 'tis that fhall ftand*, and the right hand of the Lord will have the pre-eminence. And therefore fince we can't fafely build upon our own ftrengh and meafures, 'tis but common prudence, and intereft to advance our Faith together with our Arms, and to build our confidence on him, in whom alone true Succours are to be found. Go on then Great Prince in the power and defence of the moft High, and enlarge thy Conquefts over thy

thy Enemies abroad, as thou hast already over the Hearts of thy Subjects at home. And you who have the glory of serving under his Conduct, imitate the Faith of these Worthies here, and the bravery of him that leads you. Then when ye pass through the waters, *Isai. 43. 2.* he shall be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. Then through *Psal. 60. 12.* God we shall do great acts, for it is he that shall tread down our enemies.

Then as by your Faith you shall subdue Kingdoms, so you shall secure that Faith too from all the dangers of Popery and Superstition. In short, then shall we return every man safe under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and rejoyce in the mighty works of our great Deliverer. Unto whose Providence and Invincible Arm, which alone is able to secure, as well as subdue Kingdoms, unto his Almighty Providence and Protection I commend you all.



ERRATA.

Page 4. l. 19. for our Fathers, r. these Worthies. p. 6. l. 3. r. and agreeably to that prospect which they have of the issue and event of things. p. 11. l. 19. r. as necessarily. p. 12. l. 13. r. the true greatness. p. 16. l. 23. r. usual method.

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